

QA-138

Church Hill Mill Residence

Church Hill

Private

circa 1760-1780

This large brick house was constructed as a miller's residence for the Church Hill Mill. The mill dates back to the late 17th century, but the present dwelling was evidently built in the period 1760-1780, during which time the mill was owned first by three merchants from Philadelphia, and then by Thomas May of Wilmington, Delaware. The building is a clear expression of a house form commonly associated with Pennsylvania and the northern part of Delaware and Maryland, but rarely found on the Eastern Shore. The four bay fenestration, distinctive three room floor plan, and the pent roof are all features of this house form, and datable architectural features reinforce the conclusion that the house was erected during this period.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Church Hill Mill Residence

AND/OR COMMON

The Finch House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Northwest side of old Maryland Route 213

CITY, TOWN

Church Hill

— VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

First

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Queen Anne's

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

—DISTRICT

☒ BUILDING(S)

—STRUCTURE

—SITE

—OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

—PUBLIC

☒ PRIVATE

—BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

—IN PROCESS

—BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED

—UNOCCUPIED

—WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES: RESTRICTED

—YES: UNRESTRICTED

—NO

PRESENT USE

—AGRICULTURE

—MUSEUM

—COMMERCIAL

—PARK

—EDUCATIONAL

☒ PRIVATE RESIDENCE

—ENTERTAINMENT

—RELIGIOUS

—GOVERNMENT

—SCIENTIFIC

—INDUSTRIAL

—TRANSPORTATION

—MILITARY

—OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Milton H. Finch

Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Church Hill

— VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland 21623

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

Liber #:

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Queen Anne's County Courthouse Folio #:

STREET & NUMBER

Courthouse Square

CITY, TOWN

Centreville

STATE

Maryland 21617

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

—FEDERAL —STATE —COUNTY —LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

QA-138

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Church Hill Mill Residence is situated on the northwest side of old Route 213 at the south end of Church Hill. It stands on high ground near a creek which flows into Southeast Branch. Originally this house was the mill residence for Church Hill Mill.

The main house is of brick construction, two stories high, with an original two-story brick kitchen wing extending from the northeast gable. The wing, not as wide as the main house, is set back from the front facade, while the rear wall is flush with the rear of the main house. There are flush brick chimneys in the gable ends of the house and in the northeast gable of the wing. The main house has pent gables and there is a pent roof extending across the front facade of the wing between the first and second floors.

A late 19th century two-story frame wing extends from the rear of the main house.

The main house is four bays wide, with the principal facade facing southeast. The door is in the second bay from the left; the remaining bays contain six-over-nine windows. Four

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.1 DESCRIPTION

six-over-six windows are ranged across the second floor facade. The brickwork is laid in Flemish bond above a three-course bond foundation and a plain watertable. A three-course Flemish bond belt course extends across the facade. A deep cornice with complex crown mold and bed mold is carried across each gable to form gable pents.

The southwest gable is laid entirely in three-course bond. There is one six-over-nine window to the right of the chimney on the first floor, and a pair of four-light windows flank the chimney in the upper gable. The gable eaves are finished with tapered and beaded rakeboards. A bulkhead entrance near the west corner of the southwest gable allows access to the cellar.

The frame wing covers the two middle bays on the rear facade. There is a six-over-nine window on the first floor and a six-over-six window on the second floor in the bays on either side of the wing.

The northwest gable is almost entirely covered by the kitchen wing. There is one four-light window to the left of the chimney in the upper gable.

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.2. DESCRIPTION

The brick wing is three bays wide and about six feet narrower than the main house. The southeast (front) facade is set back from the principal facade of the main house, with a door in the center bay flanked by six-over-six windows. There are two six-over-six windows on the second floor, with the center bay omitted. The brickwork is similar to the main house, with Flemish bond above a three-course bond foundation, but there is no watertable. A pent eave is carried across the front facade between the first and second floors, and a deep cornice, identical to that on the main house, extends across the facade and is carried across the gable to create a gable pent. The only opening in the northeast gable is a four-light window in the upper gable to the left of the chimney. The beaded rakeboards on this end are not original.

The rear of the wing is flush with the rear of the house. There is a door in the left bay on the first floor and a six-over-six window to the right. There are two six-over-six windows on the second floor.

The interior of the house had been altered considerably before the present owner began restoration.

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.3 DESCRIPTION

The flooring had been sold, and much of the woodwork removed. The interior walls on the first floor had been taken out, probably in the late 19th century, when the house was apparently used as a canning factory. The original floor plan consisted of three rooms, with a vertical beaded board partition dividing the house into two nearly square rooms, and a second board partition separating the southwest room into a front parlour and a narrow stair hall across the back. The present floor plan is a modification of that, with a plastered stud wall reestablishing the northeast and southwest rooms. The partition between the stairhall and the parlour was not reconstructed, allowing more light and air to both rooms, and making the stair a visual enhancement to the room.

Both the stair and the mantel in this room are original. The stair rises along the rear wall of the southwest room to a landing in the west corner. It has a closed string carriage with turned newels and balusters and a molded railing. The area below the carriage is paneled with beaded vertical boards. A paneled door below the landing leads to the cellar stairs.

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.4 DESCRIPTION

The fireplace is not centered on the gable wall, but is situated slightly toward the front wall, allowing room for the stair along the rear wall. The mantel consists of a molded surround, with the fascia board separated into two fields by a cyma molding. The inner edge is beaded, the outer edge finished with a quarter-round molding set off by fillets. The chimney breast is framed with narrow beaded corner boards and a beaded fascia board at the ceiling. The enclosed panel is plastered. To the right of the fireplace is an original cupboard with a ten-light glass door above a single raised panel door. The original butterfly shelves remain inside.

The northeast room is approximately the same size, with similar proportions. The fireplace is also offset in this room. All woodwork in this room was installed during the restoration. It was salvaged from a demolished house near Sudlersville. The mantel is similar to the original mantel in the southwest room, consisting of a beaded board surround enhanced by a quarter-round molding set off by fillets. The baseboard and chair rail are quite bold, the baseboard finished with a heavy ogee molding, and the chairrail

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.5 DESCRIPTION

consisting of a beaded fascia board and a shelf supported by a cavetto-astragal molding. A complex cornice dominated by two ovolos set off by fillets encircles the room.

The first floor of the wing is divided into two rooms. The northeast room serves as the kitchen, with a large fireplace centered on the gable wall. The southwest room serves as a dining room, with a fireplace on the center of the southwest wall and a winder stair in the north corner.

The second floor plan of the main house consists of a hall across the rear of the house, with doors leading to two chambers at the front. Both chambers are heated by small fireplaces. The mantels for these are from a wing at Finncastle, near Church Hill, which collapsed in a wind storm several years ago. At the northeast end of the hall is a door to the wing, which is several steps lower than the main house. The second floor of the wing is divided into two chambers with a winder stair leading from the southwest room to the attic of the wing. The attic of the main house is reached by a stair in the northwest corner of the hall.

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.6 DESCRIPTION

The roofs of both sections are of common rafter construction set at a 40-degree pitch. The rafters are mortised and tenoned at the ridge and secured with a peg. The collars are mortised, not lapped, and are secured with two half-inch wooden pegs. The rafters rest on a flat false plate supported by the joists. The rafters and collars are hewn and pit sawn, average $2\frac{1}{2}$ x 4 inches in size, and are laid on 26-inch centers.

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

As the mill residence for the Church Hill Mill, the Finch house is part of the surviving fabric of one of the earliest documented mills in this part of the Eastern Shore. Built circa 1770-1785, the house undoubtedly replaced a smaller, more modest structure built in the late 17th century by Thomas Collins. It served as the mill residence until it was separated from the mill and sold in 1873.

Architecturally, this house is a type commonly associated with Pennsylvania, but rarely seen in this part of Maryland. The four-bay facade, three-room plan, and pent eaves are features commonly found throughout Pennsylvania. In Maryland, examples of one or more of these features are not uncommon in Cecil County and occur in scattered examples in Kent County. The Finch House stands out as the only known

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

CONTINUATION SHEET

8.1 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

example of this type south of the Chester River. Interesting details in this house include a very fine original closed string stair and an unusual method of framing the collar beams in the roof.

The mill structure, though post Civil War in date, is on the site of a mill dating to the last decade of the 17th century.⁽¹⁾ The earliest known reference is found in the will of Thomas Collins, in which he leaves his "dwelling plantation and the mill thereon" to his son, John Collins (or Collings).⁽²⁾ There is no way to determine if this first house was on the same site as the Finch house, or if it is also the same house mentioned in the 1751 deed in which John Offley Collins conveyed the mill and mill house to John Smyth of Kent Island.⁽³⁾ Architectural evidence makes it relatively certain that the present house was not built until after the mill left the Collins family. The most useful evidence in establishing a more precise date during the second half of the 18th century is the obvious stylistic link to Pennsylvania. That the mill was owned between 1772 and 1783 by two Philadelphia merchants, Abel James and Henry Drinker, makes this the most

CONTINUATION SHEET

8.2 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

probable period of construction.⁽⁴⁾

It should be noted, however, that in 1783 the property was sold to Thomas May of Wilmington, Delaware, an area with considerable economic and architectural ties to Pennsylvania in general and Philadelphia in particular.⁽⁵⁾

Thomas May sold the mill and associated lands to Benjamin Richardson in 1788,⁽⁶⁾ and in 1796 John Leeds Richardson, acting as trustee for the estate of Benjamin Richardson, sold the property to John Brooks.⁽⁷⁾

Two years later John Brooks is listed on the 1798 Federal Direct Tax as owning part of "Spread Eagle" with a two story brick dwelling house 30 feet by 20 feet. Also listed are a two story kitchen, a shop, a stable, and a meat house. Although the exact dimensions of the house are actually 32 feet by 23 feet, there can be little doubt that this is the same house.⁽⁸⁾

In 1816 the executors of John Brooks' estate sold the mill property to Samuel Ringgold.⁽⁹⁾ An account of the mill published in the Centreville Observer in 1880 described the mill during the 1820's, and noted that the whole property was rented out and

CONTINUATION SHEET

8.3 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

occupied by John Lucas. (10)

In 1851 Samuel Ringgold died, leaving the mill property to his daughter, Rachel Amanda Ringgold. (11) She in turn sold the property to Henry Hewitt in 1854, (12) and Hewitt transferred a half interest to Kirk Brown. (13) Brown evidently assumed control of the entire mill, for after his death in 1865, (14) the mill, mill house, and 60 acres of land were offered for sale. The newspaper advertisement announcing the sale includes the following description of the mill residence:

...There is a good Two-story Brick Dwelling attached to the property, with the necessary outbuildings... (15)

The property was tied up in litigation for several years, and the initial sale had to be set aside when the purchaser, David Harris, was unable to meet the payments. (16) The property was subsequently divided, and in 1873 Joseph Guest purchased the mill residence, (17) while the Mill was sold to George Griffin. (18)

An 1877 map of Church Hill clearly shows the old mill residence, which is identified as "Joseph Guest's

CONTINUATION SHEET

8.4 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Fruit Canning Factory".⁽¹⁹⁾ Guest also appears on tax assessment lists for Church Hill for 1885 and 1895. Among the property he is assessed for is a brick house and lot on Main Street, the lot valued in 1885 at 250 dollars, the house for 800 dollars.⁽²⁰⁾ In 1895 the lot had dropped 50 dollars in value, while the house had increased another 200 dollars. He is also assessed for a blacksmith's shop adjoining that lot and another lot on New Street, "adjoining the Mill pond".⁽²¹⁾

In 1912 Guest sold the house, still referred to as "The Mill Residence", to John H. Newnam, for \$1185.⁽²²⁾ The following year Newnam sold the land to Sallie G. Palmatory.⁽²³⁾ After Sallie Palmatorie's death in 1925, the house passed to D. Edgar Hurlock, Jr.⁽²⁴⁾ The Hurlocks owned the house until 1960, when it was sold to Burton Robinson.⁽²⁵⁾ Robinson sold the property to Vincent Raimond in 1966,⁽²⁶⁾ and in 1967 Raimond sold it to Milton and Drucilla Finch, the present owners.⁽²⁷⁾

Mr. Finch undertook the restoration of the house with the help of Van Willis, a local carpenter. The only significant change in the exterior of the house involved removing a late 19th century porch and restoring the pent eave on the wing. As previously

CONTINUATION SHEET

8.5 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

noted, the interior had been altered considerably over the years. The original flooring and the first floor partitions were gone, as was much of the interior woodwork. The center partition was reconstructed, and old flooring installed. The missing woodwork was replaced using material from a demolished house in Sudlersville. The work was very carefully done, and all original material was painstakingly repaired and restored.

Footnotes

- (1) For a complete history of the Church Hill Mill, see QA-181.
- (2) Kent County Wills, No. 202. April 23, 1698. Last will and testament of Thomas Collins.
- (3) Queen Anne's County Deeds, Liber RT#C, folio 531. June 3, 1751. John Offley Collins inherited the mill property from his father, John Collins, in 1748. See Wills, Liber JE#1, folio 333. Last will and testament of John Collins.
- (4) Deeds, Liber RT#K, folio 73-77. November 9, 1772.
- (5) Deeds, Liber RT#L, folio 402. November 18, 1783.
- (6) Deeds, Liber STW#1, folio 67. May 20, 1788.
- (7) Deeds, Liber STW#4, folio 15. June 4, 1796.
- (8) 1798 Federal Direct Tax, Hall of Records.
- (9) Deeds, Liber JB#2, folio 658. May 2, 1816.
- (10) Emory, Queen Anne's County, p. 324.
- (11) Kent County Wills, Liber JFB#1, folio 334. Probated April 26, 1851.
- (12) Deeds JP#2, folio 30. April 4, 1854.

Footnotes

- (13) Deeds JP#2, folio 32. April 4, 1854.
- (14) Brown was shot and killed when he failed to answer the challenge of a Union sentry, posted with a company of troops stationed at Church Hill. The troops were black, and Brown's death sparked riots. The troops were hastily withdrawn to Caroline County, but the sentry was later killed by a man from Church Hill. See Emory, p. 324, and the Centreville Observer, June 20, 1914.
- (15) See Chancery Cause #165. Harrington vs. Brown et al. Recorded at length in Liber JW#2, folio 523 etc., a Judgement in Extenso Record. The newspaper clipping is included with the Chancery papers, and appears to date to August, 1866.
- (16) See Deeds, Liber WAGH#1, folio 40-42 and Liber JW#4, folio 244.
- (17) Deeds, Liber JW#4, folio 244. September 22, 1873.
- (18) Deeds, Liber WAGH#1, folio 40-42. March 12, 1874.
- (19) 1877 Atlas of Kent and Queen Anne's County, republished by the Wicomico Bicentennial Commission, Salisbury, 1976.
- (20) 1885 Tax Assessment, District Two: Church Hill. Hall of Records.

Footnotes

(21) 1895 Tax Assessment, District Two: Church Hill. Hall of Records.

(22) Deeds, Liber WFW#2, folio 461. December 18, 1912.

(23) Deeds, Liber WFW#4, folio 191. November 1, 1913.

(24) Wills, Liber WTB#2, folio 134. Probated February 1, 1925.

(25) Deeds, Liber TSP#53, folio 325. January 29, 1960.

(26) Deeds, Liber CWC#24, folio 646. September 28, 1966.

(27) Deeds, Liber CWC#27, folio 587. April 7, 1967.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Emory, Frederick. Queen Anne's County, Maryland.

Baltimore, 1970.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Orlando Ridout V, Historic Sites Surveyor

ORGANIZATION

Queen Anne's County Historical Society

DATE

12/12/78

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Centreville

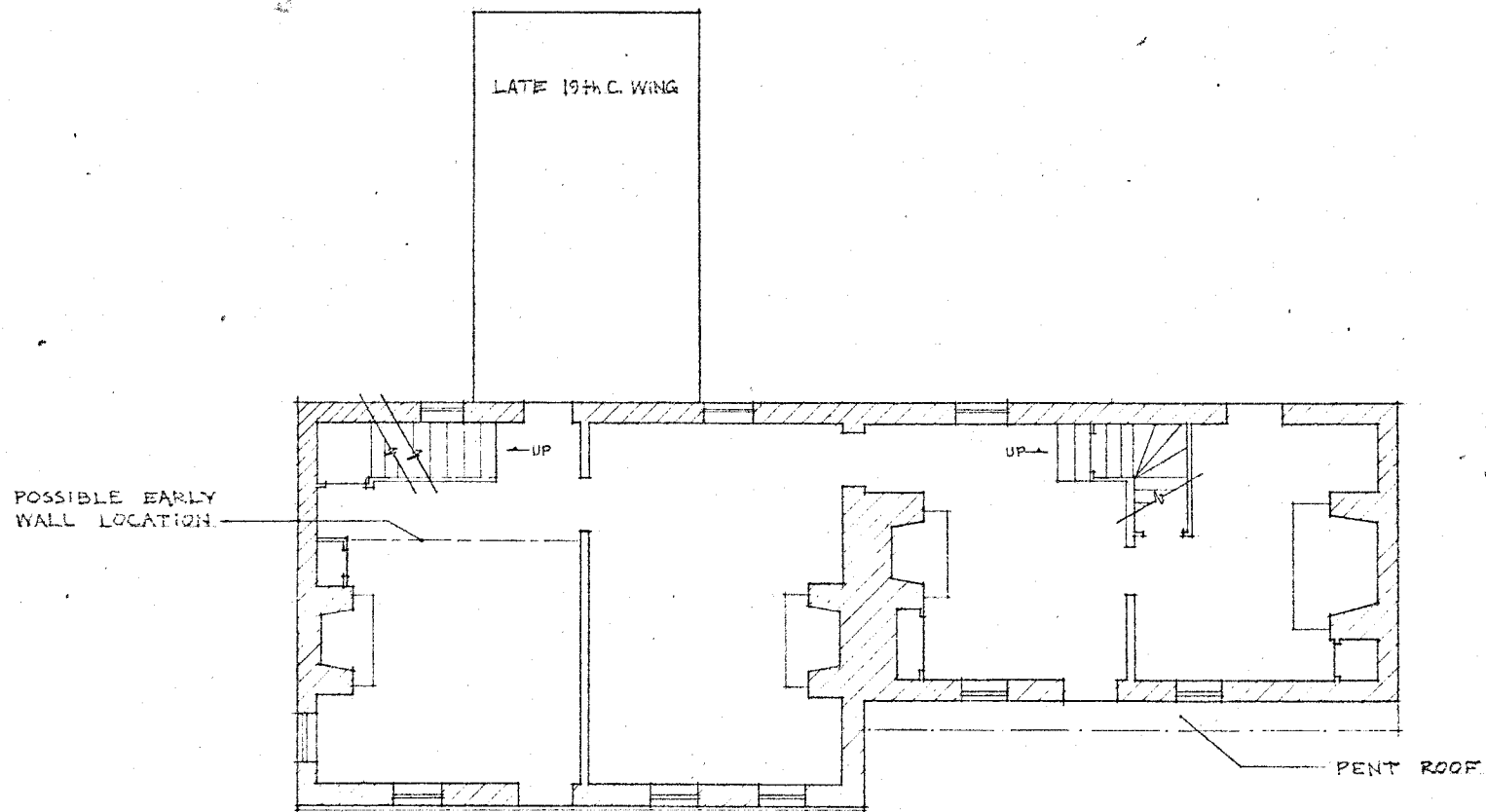
STATE

Maryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438



0 2 4 6 8 10 12 14
SCALE: 3/32" = 1'-0"



ORLANDO RIDOUT V.

QA-138

CHURCH HILL MILL RESIDENCE
CHURCH HILL, MARYLAND

JULY 7, 1978

QA-138
Church Hill
Mill Residence

Mary McCarthy
Spring/Summer 2003
Digital color photo on file at MHT





QA-138



QA-138



QA-138